

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending in this application. Claims 1-3 are rejected. Claims 1 and 2 are herein amended. Reconsideration of the rejections in view of these amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection under 35 USC §112

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to overcome the rejection.

Rejections under 35 USC §102(b)

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Govzman et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,454,332).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

In the Office Action, the Examiner urged as follows:

In response to applicants remarks, it is pointed out that while the “reapplied” vacuum pressure of the Govzman et al **system causes the clamping member (66) to retract as the plate is “repositioned”**, the suction pad (102) is also subjected to this reapplied pressure through channel (100). Further, the suction pressure at surface (102) would inherently exist at least to some extent while the plate is clamped by member (66) during the transfer of the plate between tables (20-26).

(Page 3, emphasis added).

In order to more clearly define the present invention, claim 1 has been amended to recite “a retry control unit for controlling the plate suction and lifting device so as to have the suction pad displaced and to have the plate suction and lifting device suck the plate again after thereby

changing a location to be sucked by the suction pad in the flat part of the plate if the suction pressure measured by the suction pressure detecting means does not reach a set pressure when sucking the plate.”

The portion in Govzman et al referred to by the Examiner reads as follows:

Referring to FIG. 4, in accordance with one method, a substrate may be handled as follows. Clamping member 66 is coupled to vacuum source 90 (step 110). **Sufficient vacuum pressure is applied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition** (step 112; three-way valve is in the high vacuum position). The substrate is positioned on transfer arm 28 in contact with contact surface 102 (step 114). The pressure is monitored (step 116). **If the pressure monitored by sensor 96 is higher than a first threshold (step 118), the substrate is not properly positioned. Sufficient vacuum pressure is then reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition (step 112)**, and the substrate is re-positioned on the transfer arm (step 114). If the monitored pressure is higher than a second threshold (step 122), pusher 70 has missed the substrate and is over-extended. In this case, pusher sensing channels 104 and 106 will be open. **Sufficient vacuum pressure is then reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted position (step 112)**, and the substrate is re-positioned on the transfer arm (step 114). If the monitored pressure is lower than the second threshold (step 122), the substrate is properly clamped onto the transfer arm and the substrate now may be transferred for processing (step 124).

(Column 6, lines 13-43).

As already discussed in the previous response, in Govzman et al, vacuum pressure is applied to place **clamping member 66** in the retracted condition but not to suck the substrate. Sufficient vacuum pressure must be applied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition. Therefore, the portion referred to by the Examiner merely indicates that when the vacuum pressure monitored by sensor 96 is not sufficient, the clamping member 66 is not placed in the retracted position, thus, the substrate is not properly positioned. Then sufficient vacuum pressure is reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition.

Moreover, the description "Sufficient vacuum pressure is then reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition (step 112)" in Govzman et al merely indicates reapplying vacuum pressure. Govzman et al does not displace the "suction pad" to change a location to be sucked by the suction pad in the flat part of the plate by having the suction pad displaced.

Therefore, Govzman et al does not teach or suggest, among other things, "a retry control unit for controlling the plate suction and lifting device so as to have the suction pad displaced and to have the plate suction and lifting device suck the plate again after thereby changing a location to be sucked by the suction pad in the flat part of the plate if the suction pressure measured by the suction pressure detecting means does not reach a set pressure when sucking the plate."

For at least these reasons, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Govzman et al. Claims 2 and 3, depending from claim 1, also patentably distinguish over Govzman et al for at least the same reasons.

Thus, the 35 USC §102(b) rejection should be withdrawn.

It is submitted that nothing in the cited references, taken either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests all the features recited in each claim of the present invention. Thus all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections, withdrawal of the rejections and an early issue of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.


Application No. 10/073,896
Amendment dated December 30, 2003
Reply to Office Action of November 3, 2003

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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